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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, people have a lot of time for leisure during which they try to engage in sports and recreational activities. Various activities are described which are specially devised for children, old people, the mentally ill and other special populations. Examples of career opportunities in recretion and a description of the duties that are characteristic for each are given. The personal qualities and level of education as well as preparation and training of individuals involved in recreational activities are discussed. Next, career opportunities in professional sports are described. Information about salaries, duration probability of career as well as training and preparation of professional athletes, coaches, trainers, scouts and sports administrators are mentioned. (SE)

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5 – CAREERS IN RECREATION AND SPORTS

ED120649

Stuart Cowper,
Director

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

CAREERS CANADA

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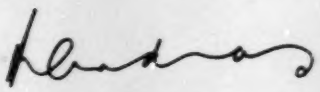
MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

All Canadians must be given the opportunity to determine their abilities, develop them through education and training, and apply their talents in a meaningful occupation. To achieve this goal, sound information must be made available to every Canadian at a stage in their development where fruitful decisions can be made. Careers – Canada is a major effort towards this end.

The benefits of the Careers – Canada series should affect many people: the student considering entrance into the world of work; the worker seeking to change occupations; the prospective immigrant; the manpower or vocational guidance counsellor, in fact, anyone wishing to match people with jobs.

Many people have been involved in the production of Careers – Canada. I join them in wishing you every success in your career search.



Robert Andras

NOTE TO READERS

The ultimate judge of any material is the user. It is recognized that improvements can be made in the initial booklets and we ask all readers to forward any suggestions to us. The consolidation of these comments will allow us to better provide you with the type of information required.

Suggestions and comments should be addressed to:

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Occupational and Career Analysis
and Development Branch,
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305 Rideau Street,
OTTAWA, Ontario.
K1A 0J9

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HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE

The word recreation covers a wide range of activities. To some, it triggers dreams of parties with friends, to others, fishing or camping. You may think of working on the family car, window-shopping, painting, playing ball, or just relaxing and day-dreaming. The word recreation really means any type of activity that a person does just for fun, or for personal satisfaction and fulfillment during leisure time.

Many activities we do for after-work or after-school enjoyment were unknown a century ago because leisure time was a rare commodity. In fact, one of the main reasons for recreation specialists today is that people just don't know what to do with more time off!

But you might be surprised to know that as long ago as 300 B.C. people like Aristotle were big promoters of recreation. Aristotle believed that the only real purpose of work was to achieve recreation. He felt that recreation was absolutely necessary for developing the soul, and staying young at heart. In the 4th century A.D., the Romans devoted 175 days each year to recreation and leisure, and in the 13th century in France, craftsmen worked only 195 days each year devoting the rest to recreation, fairs, and festivals. So the idea of plenty of leisure time has not been invented in the last few decades: some civilizations knew and lived with it for centuries.

What happened between then and now? The industrial revolution! With industrialization, the idea of the "work ethic," emerged. The popular notion was, and to a large extent still is, that work is noble and the only true path to personal fulfillment. Leisure was considered "the work of the devil."

To a large extent, people in today's society are torn in two separate directions. Although they are faced with increasing leisure time, they are still much influenced by the work ethic. Many people may say they would like more time off, but many who do obtain shorter working hours find second jobs!

Why is leisure time increasing? Automation and mass-production are producing the goods and services of our society faster and with fewer people. So while our population grows, the need for workers declines. Today's labour-saving devices also allow us far more free time than in the past. This situation has drastically reduced the work week: many firms have now adopted four day work-weeks (four ten-hour days). In the near future some of us will probably have an equal number of workdays and days off.

Professional recreation people assist others to discover the most rewarding uses of their free time. They try to ensure that leisure time leads to satisfaction and self-fulfillment, not to boredom. They strive to teach people to be physically healthy through sports and exercise, and mentally healthy through participation in a wide variety of activities that excite interest and enthusiasm.

A large aspect of recreation is sport. Canadians of all ages—no doubt including you—are actively involved in some form of sport. Hockey, football, swimming, skiing, figure skating, tennis, badminton, and curling, among others, each have their enthusiastic following. Most people participate in sports for fun and for the feeling of being active and physically fit. However, a small number of Canadians can make their living as professionals in the world of sport because thousands of people are willing to spend their money and leisure time watching professional sporting events as a form of recreation. Yet others earn their living as administrators for non-profit sports—governing bodies at the federal, provincial or municipal level. Both professional athletes and those who earn their living by helping others to use their leisure time productively, will be discussed in separate sections of this bookiet, as each field is quite different in a number of ways.

FIELDS OF WORK

Recreational services are provided by many institutions such as federal, provincial and local governments, hospitals, YMCA and YWCA, and private clubs. Most recreational positions are found in largely populated areas, but some are also available in such settings as national and provincial parks.

People considering a career in recreation can select from among many organizations. Each offers its own approach to recreational services, and each serves different groups in our society. With proper training, young people have a wide choice of jobs to match their interests and talents.

The following chart shows *some* of the facilities where recreation people may work, co-ordinate or administer, in a medium-sized city.

There are several distinct areas of specialization in the recreation field: in this booklet they have been divided into five major groups. However, because the groups overlap to a large extent, generalization has been necessary. The major groups are:

Municipal Recreation
High Density Recreation
Institutional and Therapeutic Recreation
Outdoor Recreation
Recreation Research and Education

Municipal Recreation — This group includes all those activities and services directly sponsored by, and facilities operated by, a municipal recreation committee, council or department. At present more recreation specialists are employed in this area than in any other.

High Density Recreation — Recreation specialists in this group attempt to provide adequate recreational outlets for people who encounter the social stresses and pressures of living in crowded urban centres. The agencies involved provide services to complement those provided by municipal recreation programmes, and include, among others, commercial and youth-serving recreational agencies.

Institutional and Therapeutic Recreation — Ill, physically and mentally handicapped, and socially disadvantaged people are entitled to personal fulfillment through recreation like anyone else. Institutional and/or therapeutic recreation is designed to help these people meet their basic needs for recreation, to speed up their recovery or improve their conditions, or to bring about a

desired behavioural change in institutionalized people. At present, the number of recreation specialists entering this area is rapidly increasing.

Outdoor Recreation — Specialists in this group provide, administer and supervise outdoor recreational services, including all types of parks, picnicking and camping facilities and outdoor sporting facilities. This is a growing field because, particularly during holiday seasons, huge numbers of people migrate from the cities on weekends and holidays to enjoy various forms of outdoor recreation.

Recreation Research and Education — In this group are those recreation specialists who study existing recreational programmes and facilities, plan new ones, attempt to forecast future demands for recreation services, and train people for careers in this ever-expanding field.

NATURE OF WORK

The field of recreation offers innumerable positions within a wide variety of organizations and agencies. A careful look shows that there are more similarities than differences between many of the positions. In fact, it is possible to group them under a few broad headings:

- Activity Leaders
- Programme Supervisors
- Facility Managers
- Researchers and Teachers

EXAMPLES OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN RECREATION

Type	Organized by	Positions Available
Municipal Recreation	– Municipal Governments – Educational Systems	Park and Recreation Directors or Superintendents Parks Planners Recreation Analysts Programme Supervisors Centre Directors Recreation Facility Managers—arenas, swimming pools Recreation Activity Leaders and Specialists
High Density Recreation	– Real Estate Developers Neighbourhood Associations and Recreation Club – Girl Guides, Boy Scouts – Churches – Private Clubs	Park Planners Programme Directors Programme Supervisors Centre Directors Community Programme Leaders Recreation Resource Specialists Activity Leaders Pool and Other Facility Managers
Institutional or Therapeutic Recreation	– Federal, Provincial and Municipal Government – Hospitals – Crippled Children's Centres – Homes for the Aged – Associations for the Mentally Retarded – Prisons and Correctional Institutions	Programme Directors Programme Supervisors Reading Instructors Recreation Activity Leaders and Specialists
Outdoor Recreation	– Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments – Private Agencies – Schools – YMCA, YWCA, YM-YWCA	Park Administrators Nature Preserves Supervisors Recreation Planners Recreation Resource Specialists Outdoor Education Supervisors, Activity Leaders and Recreation Consultants Camp Directors Counsellors in Private and Public Camps
Leisure Research and Education	– Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments – Community Colleges – Universities – Recreation Consultant Firms	Recreation Researchers Resource Specialists Recreation Economists Recreation Analysts and Planners Recreation Consultants Recreation Teachers

Please Note: These are only examples of some recreation jobs and some organizations which employ recreation specialists. You must keep in mind also that the names of specific positions may vary from one employer to the next, so the titles used above are intentionally general.

ACTIVITY LEADERS

Recreation activity leaders are employed in all of the major recreation groups. They are in a direct, face-to-face relationship with people who receive recreational services. They plan, organize, and look after the running of activities which may be planned for only one or two people, or large groups. Leaders also instruct people in the proper use of facilities, such as pools, and ski lifts, and the correct rules, techniques and skills for all types of leisure-time activities. An important aspect of their job is to interest and involve as many people as possible.

Activity leaders sometimes control several closely related activities at one location. For example, one leader might schedule and supervise all sports and games. Someone else might look after all arts and crafts. More often leaders will be primarily concerned with one type of activity, such as swimming, camping, or exercise sessions. They frequently conduct classes and coach teams in the activity in which they specialize; they may also train and supervise volunteer or part-time leaders.

RECREATION PROGRAMME SUPERVISORS

Planning recreational programmes and supervising other recreation workers is the work of programme supervisors. The term recreational programme really has more than one meaning. It may be one part of the total recreational services provided by a municipal parks and recreation department. Examples might be:

- Sport and Athletics Programme
- Cultural Activities Programme
- Senior Citizens Programme
- Youth Programme
- Special Needs Programme

A programme may also consist of the recreational services and facilities provided by a small private agency, an industrial firm, a ski resort, a real estate development, a correctional institute or a hospital.

Programme supervisors must find out where new or improved services are necessary and decide how best to meet these needs. Thus a big part of the job is meeting specific individuals, groups and agencies in recreational services. Every effort is made to involve the community in recreational services decisions as much as possible.

Programme supervisors may have both full and part-time activity leaders working on various parts of their overall programme. In some cases, there may be as many as 50 part-time and volunteer staff. Programme supervisors train, direct, coordinate and evaluate the work of their entire staff. They also schedule the use of all required facilities, often through arrangements with other organizations and agencies. Preparing budgets to cover their programmes, ordering supplies, receiving and writing correspondence, and preparing formal programme reports, are all essential duties of programme supervisors as well.

NATURE OF WORK

There are many senior positions in recreational administration, for example, recreation directors. Except in rare cases however, these positions are held by people who have advanced through direct leadership and supervisory jobs in the recreation field.

Recreation administrators co-ordinate all recreational services in a recreation complex. They continuously study and assess the aims, extent of activities, costs, benefits, and results of all recreational programmes for which they are responsible. Their challenge is to meet present and future recreational demands by expanding or improving existing services, planning and designing new ones if necessary, and obtaining the money to do so.

RECREATION FACILITY MANAGERS

Recreation facility managers may be employed in maintaining swimming pools, athletic fields, playgrounds, golf courses, camp grounds, curling or skating rinks, ski hills, bowling alleys, billiard halls, rifle ranges and many other types of sports complexes or activity centres. They are responsible for operating and maintaining the facility in first-rate condition. To do this, they must have a thorough knowledge of the facilities and equipment.

The duties of a recreation facility manager usually include supervising an operations and maintenance staff, making reservations for individuals, groups and teams, and scheduling activities to make the best use of facilities. The manager also enforces safety regulations and rules concerning dress, conduct and use of equipment and facilities. Some facility managers collect fees from people who use the facilities; some also maintain a stock of sports or recreational equipment for loan, rental or sale.

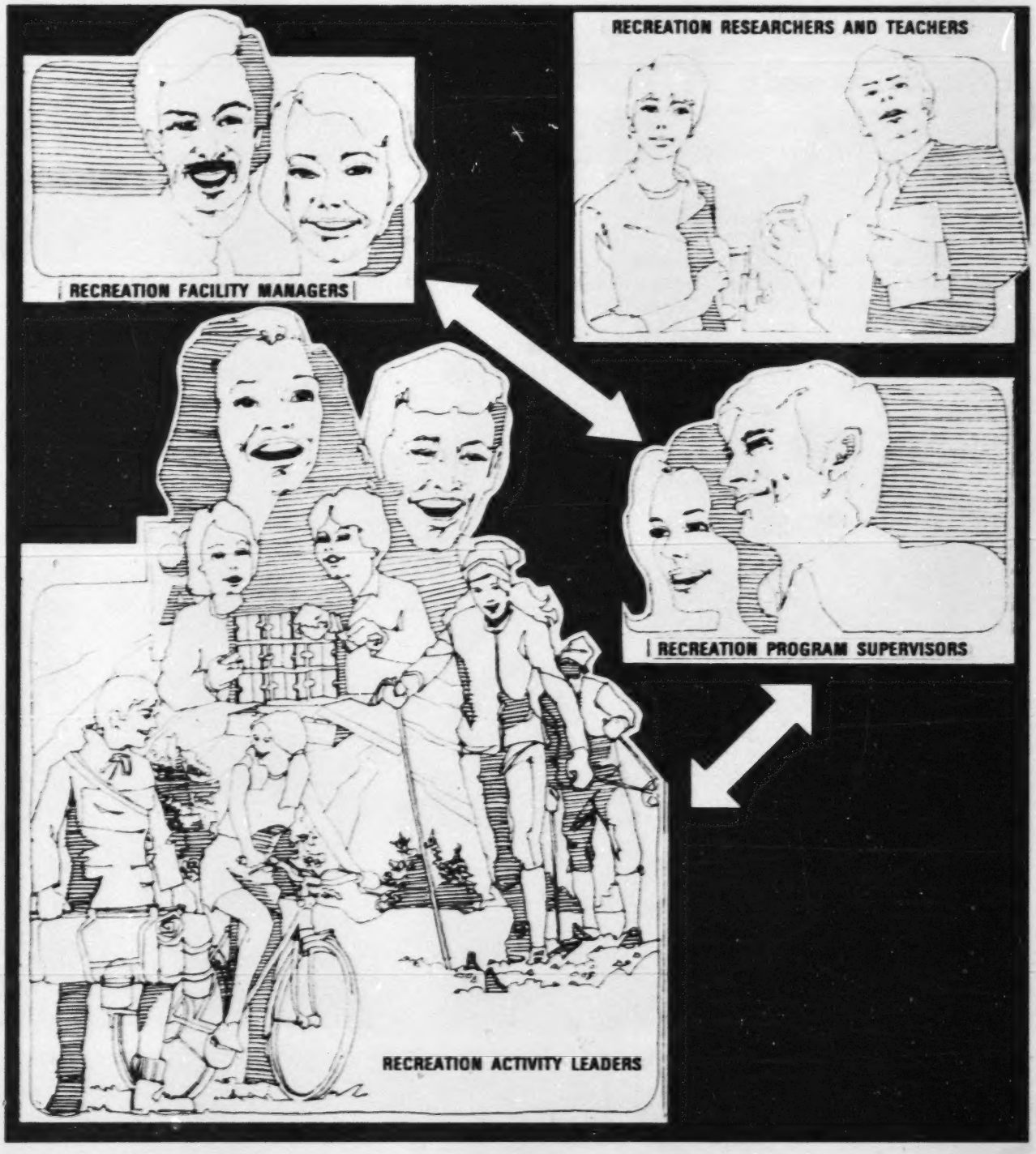
The duties of facility managers vary considerably depending on the facility. For example, one person may manage a small swimming pool, while another may be in charge of an entire sports complex, or all operations and maintenance of a large ski-resort. For the more responsible positions, specialized education and training programmes are required.

RECREATION RESEARCHERS, CONSULTANTS AND TEACHERS

Recreation analysts, planners, economists, and consultants conduct research in the field of recreation and leisure-time activities. They collect and study information on various aspects of recreation, and prepare estimates, forecasts and reports based on past and present trends in the field. These people also give advice to private, commercial, industrial, institutional, governmental or non-profit recreational organizations and associations, regarding the adequacy of recreational services to meet present and future needs. They help to plan new projects and services, and assist the people responsible for developing recreational policies.

Recreation teachers provide their students with theoretical and practical knowledge and skills enabling them to assist others in the enjoyable, rewarding use of leisure-time. As well as theoretical knowledge, an ability to communicate, not only academic facts and theories, but such qualities as respect, concern, and sensitivity for the needs of others is necessary. Students must also be aware of the various agencies providing services in the recreation field, and how these services complement each other.

NATURE OF WORK



WORKING CONDITIONS

As you might expect, working conditions may vary considerably between recreation positions. Administrators, directors, and supervisors may work indoors in modern offices, but generally they spend some time outside visiting different facilities. Recreation activity leaders may work inside, outside, or both, and weather conditions will not always be favourable. The physical environment may vary drastically from a cold ice rink to a hot summer playground, or a hospital setting.

If you are looking for a nine-to-five job, with evenings and weekends free, forget the recreation field! The hours of work will vary from eight hours per day, five days a week, to long and often irregular hours. People entering this field must realize that they will often be working while others are enjoying leisure-time. Many agencies provide time off for overtime, but this is not always possible.

Most public and private recreation agencies provide two to four weeks annual vacation and fringe benefits such as sick leave, pension plans and hospital insurance. Some agencies may pay part of your expenses if you decide to continue your education.

Recreation specialists help others to make their leisure-time rewarding and fun. There can be a great deal of satisfaction in meeting a variety of people and helping them to enjoy themselves. Many activities are fun for all concerned, including the recreation specialist!

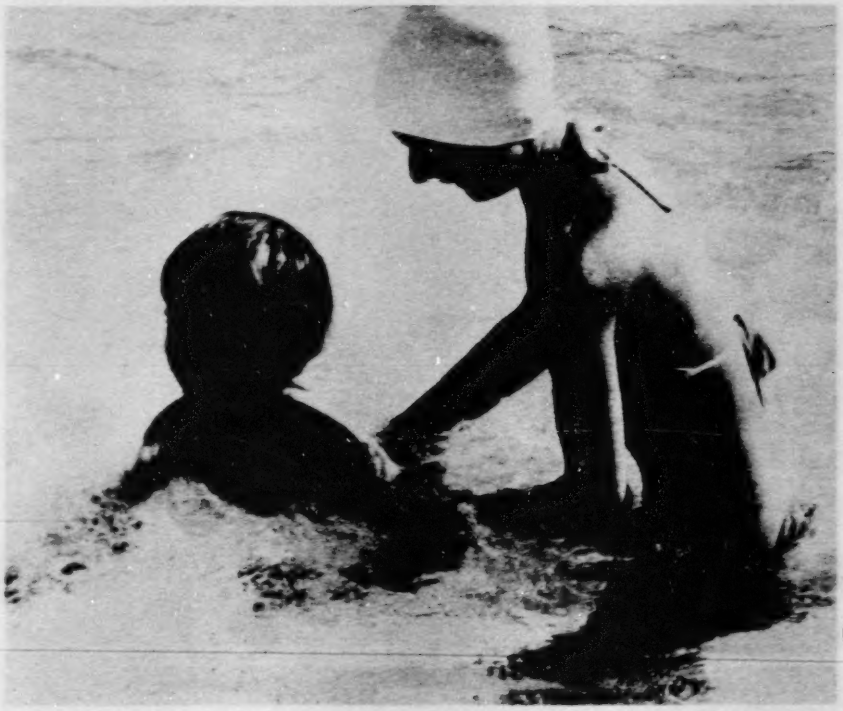
As with most career fields, opportunities for promotion and higher levels of responsibility are determined on the basis of skill, education, experience and ambition. The normal entry-level position in this field is the recreation activity leader, or the recreation facility manager. However, some community college and university graduates, particularly those with extensive practical experience, are hired directly into supervisory positions, and a small number enter at the administrative level.

Recreation activity leaders who have ability, possess the necessary education and experience, and demonstrate leadership skills, will usually progress to programme supervisor positions. Some will advance to recreation director positions and senior administrative jobs. (It should be pointed out, however, that many activity leaders are so satisfied with the face-to-face leadership aspect of their jobs that they choose not to move into administrative positions). Often, in order to progress to senior levels, further academic training, either in recreation, a related social science, or administration will be necessary. However, advancement without graduate studies may be possible on the basis of top-notch experience and outstanding performance.

Recreation facility managers can progress to supervisory positions, but normally they are not promoted to recreational administration without further formal studies at a community college or university.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Recreation specialists must be dedicated to serving people. Those considering this career field should have a pleasant personality, a sense of humour, and the ability to teach, influence and lead other people (including the very old, the very young, ill, impaired or retarded people, delinquents and prisoners, all with their special demands). They must also be sincerely concerned for the growth and development of individuals through rewarding leisure activities.



As well as a willingness to work and learn, the recreation specialist must possess a good imagination, be adaptable, and stay calm in crisis situations such as an accident or fight. An involvement with people, and a sensitivity to their needs and interests is essential. Tolerance and sympathy, energy, enthusiasm, and optimism are also valuable assets in making friends and encouraging co-operative relationships.

Programme supervisors, directors, and administrators also require good numerical and reasoning ability in order to analyze community recreational needs and resources, to study costs, and prepare budgets.

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

If you are considering the recreation field as a career, you should follow an academic or university entrance programme in high school. Apart from required subjects, physical education, sociology, psychology, and fine arts are recommended. A high school diploma is the minimum qualification for any entry-level position, and a recreation diploma or degree is often the prerequisite. Advancement is extremely difficult without formal education beyond high school. Community colleges generally offer a two year recreation diploma programme, and universities offer a four year bachelor's programme.

Community college and university recreation curricula vary in content. However, you should expect to study the philosophy of recreation, its principles and objectives, as well as general courses (including communication and social sciences) and those which stress group leadership techniques and programme planning and evaluation. The various programmes include courses emphasizing technical skills in arts and crafts, sports, music, dramatics, dance and water related activities. These are the tools of the recreation specialist.

You may wish to specialize in a recreational area, such as municipal, therapeutic, or outdoor recreation, or attempt to establish an overall understanding of the profession by studying courses in all areas. You might even consider registering in a faculty related to recreation and then choosing several recreation courses as "electives." For example, if you are interested in an industrial recreation career you could pursue a primary interest in business administration with secondary interests in recreation subjects. To work in correctional institutions you might graduate in psychology or sociology with several electives in recreation.

Courses which can be related to recreation can greatly benefit a specific recreation career. For example, Physical Education, Urban and Regional Planning, Administration, Ecology, Biology, and Forestry courses would be valuable to a person interested in outdoor recreation. Similarly, someone interested in the overall recreation field, could take courses in Geography, Economics, Business Administration, Sociology and Psychology.

Practical field experiences are an important part of most college or university recreation leadership programmes. Such experience is important because it allows students to test classroom theories and techniques, brings them into direct contact with professional recreation specialists, tests their interest and potential, reveals their strengths and helps to overcome their weaknesses, and gives them a better knowledge of themselves and others.

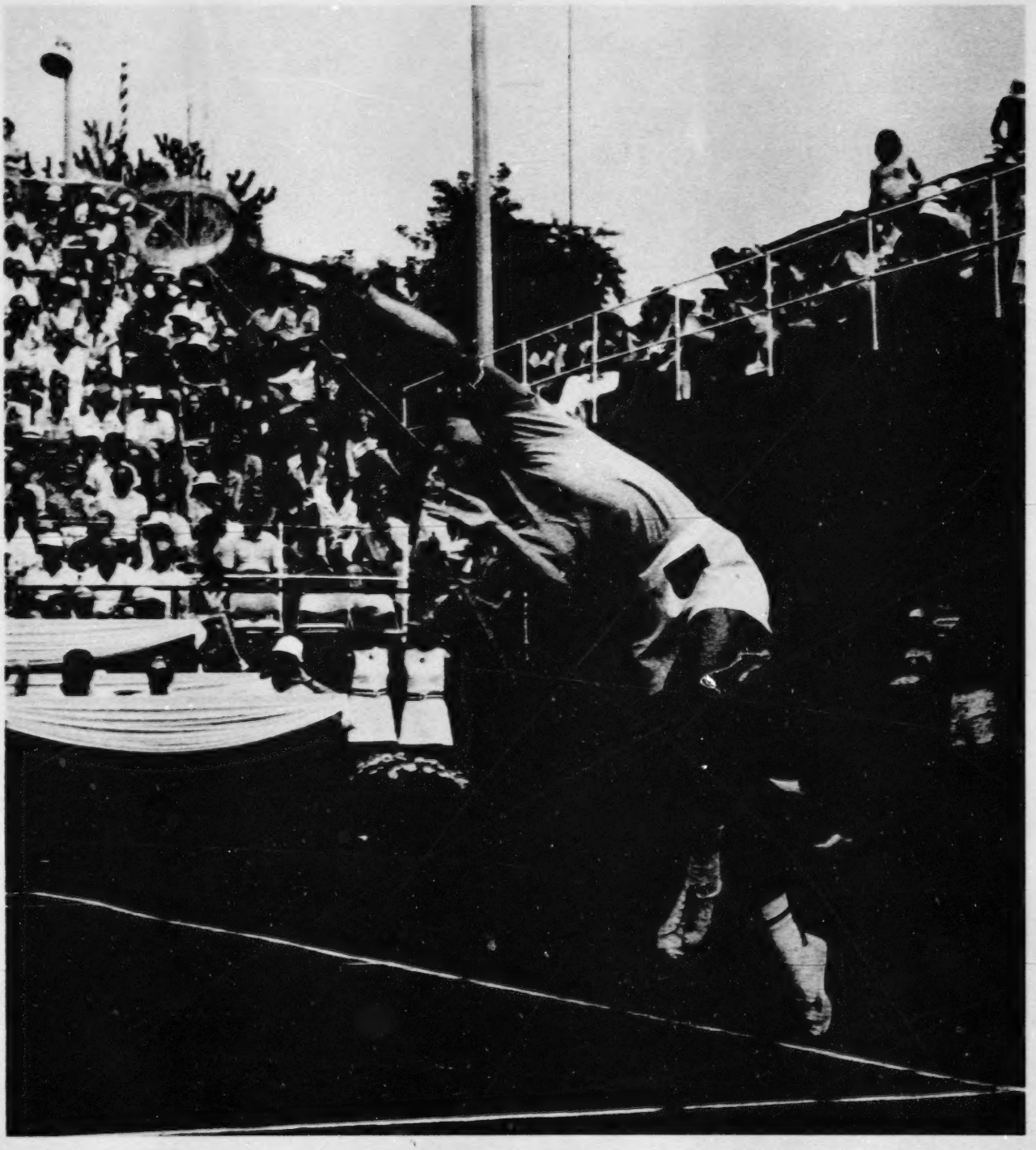
If you are considering a career as a recreation specialist, try to get as much leadership experience as possible while you are in school. Consider working as a camp-counsellor, or counsellor-in-training, participating in organizations like the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, YMCA or YWCA, joining church social groups and school clubs, local art, music and drama groups and sports teams, or volunteering in hospitals or recreational programmes. Such experiences will help to build the skills necessary for a successful recreation career. Generally speaking, the most successful people in this field have a strong sense of commitment to their jobs and continue to further their professional knowledge on their own.

For further information on all post-secondary recreation courses, consult with your school guidance counsellor, the institutions concerned, recreation interest groups, or provincial associations related to the specific field.

A substantial growth in the employment of recreation specialists is anticipated over the next ten years. In fact, nearly half of today's recreation graduates are being employed in newly created recreational positions. Others are self-employed, for example operating small businesses such as bowling alleys, pool halls or art classes. Reasons for the anticipated expansion of recreation opportunities are population growth, the continued trend to urbanization, increased leisure-time, and rising incomes. More people are taking part in organized sports, and travelling to parks, camps and resorts.

Public pressure for recreational services will result in the creation of new playgrounds, provincial and federal parks. Growing awareness of physical fitness voiced by governments and educators should encourage more public and industrial recreation programmes. Demands for recreational programmes geared to the entire age spectrum will continue to grow because of the additional leisure-time available to senior citizens, due to earlier retirements and longer life-spans, and a greater need for day-care facilities as more mothers enter the work force.

As you have surely noticed in the past few years, the number of community tennis courts, softball and baseball diamonds, golf courses, outdoor swimming pools, recreation buildings and indoor recreation centres has already increased. The growth of facilities and recreational services will continue. The future looks bright indeed for careers in recreation.



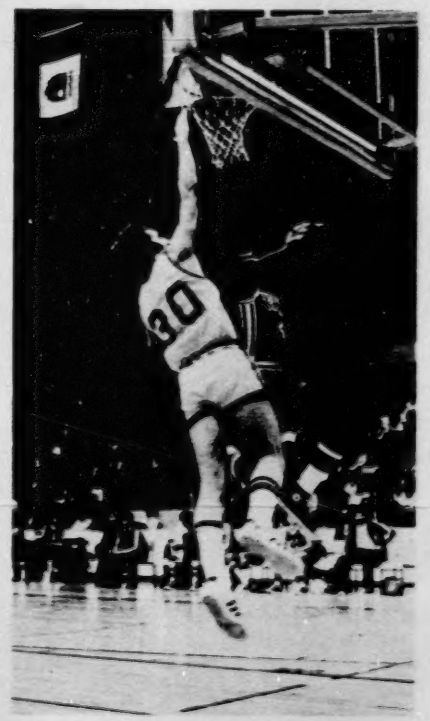
FIELDS OF WORK

Have you ever imagined yourself flashing across the blue line and scoring the winning goal? or diving into the end-zone in front of thousands of fans? or streaking down a grand slalom ahead of everyone else? Like most people, you have probably thought of doing these or similar feats. It's a beautiful dream isn't it?

Sports and all varieties of competitive physical activities have figured prominently in every human society since the dawn of history. They were considered important in developing physical and mental conditioning and in practising survival techniques, such as hunting and fighting skills. The top competitors occupied an elite position in their society. Not too many centuries ago, on this continent, a game something like a cross between basketball and lacrosse was played. Players were fiercely competitive and the cost of losing the "game" was often death!

Although the outcome of a sporting event is not as drastic today, people in North America still take their sports very seriously, and top-notch athletes remain heroes. Thousands of Canadians attend sporting events each year and millions more watch them on television. In 1972, during the first Canada-Russia hockey series, nearly half the people in this country were glued to their television sets as a team of Canadian athletes took on the best hockey players from the largest country in the world. The emotional explosion when the winning goal was scored enveloped all Canada in a shock-wave of excitement.

At times in their lives, almost all Canadians are actively involved in organized physical activities. However, in spite of the impact of sports on our culture, relatively few people become sports professionals. In this section we will discuss a number of sports occupations. You may think of several others. If they have not been discussed here, check your local library for information.



FIELDS OF WORK

Professionals in the sports field are usually employed in cities and towns which are large enough to support professional teams, and highly organized, wide-ranging athletic programmes and organizations. Exceptions of course, are people like ski instructors, rodeo riders, and fishing guides whose activities are often well away from cities and towns.

The work may be underwater (diving instructors), in the sky (gliding and sky-diving instructors), on ice (hockey players, referees, figure skaters or figure-skating instructors), on asphalt (tennis instructors, car-racing drivers), in crowded stadiums, arenas, racetracks, exhibition grounds and gymnasiums, or amidst the trees and rolling fairways of a golf course. Employment may be with professional sports teams, private athletic clubs, commercial recreational organizations (such as ski resorts, health spas, bowling alleys), municipal sports and recreation departments, or universities. Employment may even be outside this country, since some Canadian athletes are scouted and signed by teams in the United States and elsewhere.

NATURE OF WORK

In the following pages the jobs of professional athletes, coaches, trainers, scouts, sports instructors, sports officials, sports scientists and physical fitness consultants will be examined. This list certainly is not exhaustive, but, hopefully, will give an idea of the opportunities available in this field.

NATURE OF WORK

PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES

Although there are very few Canadian professional athletes, for many people their names are household words. Professional athletes are among Canada's best known citizens. Their exploits are told almost daily on radio and television, and reported in newspapers and magazines.

At one time or another you may have day-dreamed about being a professional athlete. Perhaps you are seriously thinking of a career as a pro right now. Some people make it, but breaking into professional sports ranks is usually difficult.

If you are considering a professional career, probably you are playing your favourite sport as an amateur. Therefore there is no need to tell you what a player in that sport does: you already know! In the following paragraphs, several aspects of Canadian team sports which offer athletes a career are discussed, singling out hockey and football as examples. You will find information on "individual" sports, such as golf and tennis pros, and athletic instructors (i.e., ski and swimming instructors) further on in this booklet.

Football Players

There are nine teams in the Canadian Football League (CFL) each with 32 player rosters. Generally about 17 of these players are Canadians. That means that there are only about 153 Canadian pro football players in the CFL right now. In 1974, of the 28 young Canadian players drafted into the league, 20 were from colleges in this country, and eight were completing sports scholarships at American colleges. Many of these players were not regular starters on the teams that drafted them.

The average football player's career is only about five years. In some positions, such as halfback, the career average is even shorter.

Each team plays 16 regular season games, as well as exhibition and possibly play-off games. Players are usually involved in practice sessions, viewing game films, strategy sessions or games, six days each week. The season, including training camp, runs from June to December.

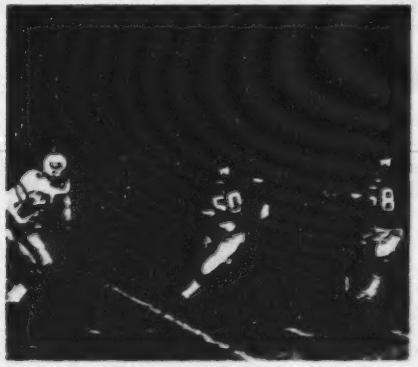
Competition for the available positions is stiff. However, if you make it, the rewards, both in personal satisfaction and prestige, can be great.

Hockey Players

In 1975 there were two major and two minor hockey leagues in North America. The major leagues are the National Hockey League (NHL), consisting of 18 teams, and the World Hockey Association (WHA), with 12 teams. The minor leagues include the nine-team American Hockey League (AHL), and the eight-team Central Hockey League (CHL). There are 19 players on a team (including two goal tenders).

There are over 450 players in the major leagues, and just under 400 players in the minor leagues. Players are usually drafted into professional hockey from the Canadian junior leagues when they "come of age" (21 years old), but some are drafted from Canadian or American universities and colleges. Canada has three principle junior leagues: the Quebec Major League, the Ontario Hockey Association, and the Western Canada Junior League.

At the present time, over 13,000 Canadians play junior hockey, and over 400,000 play in other amateur leagues, such as peewees and midgets. According to the NHL, 247 players were drafted into the league in 1974. Of these, 39 have made an appearance in the league and only 21 are playing regularly. The remainder are playing for various farm clubs in the minor leagues.



The season starts with training camp in early September and ends with the playoffs in mid-May. The NHL schedule calls for 80 games, but with exhibition games and playoffs, a team may play over 100 games in a season. A player can count on being on the ice for a game or practice six or seven days a week.

The average career for a pro hockey player lasts only seven to ten years. Career lengths increase with league expansions however, because of the shortage of highly skilled players. The pay is very good, with salaries well above average — for an eight-month working year.

COACHES

A coach's task is to put together a team whose members are in top physical condition, who work well together and who are ready to compete against other teams. This is a complex undertaking requiring several types of skills. Spectators at competitions see the coach performing only one aspect of his or her job.

At the beginning of each season the coach sizes up the talent available for his or her team. Many will probably be regulars from previous seasons; others will be new players hoping to earn a spot on the team. The coach must decide which athletes are good enough to make the squad, and later select the "first-string" players. Often, in the middle of a game, the coach must decide what lineup changes will improve the team's performance. To make sure the choices are good ones, the coach generally keeps daily performance records, case histories and summaries of all athletes' performances.

Early in the season, the coach works out basic strategy and decides on plays and techniques based on a thorough knowledge of the skills of his or her team members, and those of opposing teams. The coach may make trips or send scouts to watch competitors play exhibition or regular season games, and then develop "game strategies" to fit each opposing team.

A coach is a teacher. At the amateur level, instruction and demonstration of the fundamental rules and skills of the game will be necessary. Although athletes and coaches hope to win as often as possible, ideally the emphasis at this level, is on developing good, basic skills and a healthy attitude towards sport. At the professional level, the coach is more concerned with instructing in strategy, offensive and defensive play, and teaching athletes to recognize an opponent's strengths, weaknesses and strategies. The coach will make teaching decisions based on errors made by players in practices or games, analysis of game films, and scouting information.

Because good practice sessions are important in developing a smoothly functioning team, the coach must plan each session in advance, and decide how much time will be spent on conditioning, skills, team patterns, chalk talks, and practice games. If the team has assistant coaches and a trainer on staff, the head coach must decide how they can be used most effectively, generally assigning each a specific responsibility.

In order to obtain the best possible performance from each athlete and the team as a whole, the coach must have a good understanding of human nature, especially under tense conditions, and be able to say and do the right thing at the right time. During actual games, the coach analyzes the game's progress and gives instructions to players.

NATURE OF WORK

TRAINERS

Trainers (sometimes called "coaches" in individual sports) are concerned with the prevention of injuries, the care of the injured players, and the development of conditioning programmes. They are employed by all professional, and some amateur teams in all sports. They also work with individual athletes in such fields as boxing, skiing, swimming, track and field. Normally they are proficient in the sport in question.

The trainer advises athletes in improving their general physical fitness level, as well as in developing specific muscles or muscle groups to increase proficiency in their sport. Setting up routine and corrective exercise programmes for individuals and groups, and devising special diets to improve health, gain or lose weight, may take up much of a trainer's time.

If an athlete is injured, either in practice or competition, it is the trainer's job to look after the person's physical well-being, and if possible, to get the athlete back into the competition. Obviously, the trainer must be an expert in first aid, and a first-class masseur in order to relieve soreness, strains, pulled muscles, cramps, and bruises. Awareness and promotion of safety measures is naturally a prime concern of all trainers.

SCOUTS

Professional scouts try to find "hot" new prospects for their team. This requires considerable travelling to observe young players performing in different leagues throughout this continent, and sometimes abroad as well. When scouts discover an athlete who seems to have good potential, they watch the player in action and review his or her past record. They look for players who have outstanding skills, are in first-class physical condition, and who possess such personal qualities as determination, drive, and a strong competitive spirit.

When a prospect is located, a report is made to the team the scout is representing. This report will contain the results of scouting assignments, including selection or rejection of players seen and interviewed, and the names of good prospects who may be signed up in the future. The scout may be instructed to negotiate with players or their managers, and to arrange contracts on behalf of the professional team's management. Scouting opposing teams to assist the coach in determining specific strategies, is also an important part of the scout's job.

A professional scout must maintain reliable contacts with many teams, often in a variety of leagues, and keep up-to-date files on all prospects. Errors in judgement, either in not selecting a potentially excellent player, or in selecting someone who is just not going to make it, can be very costly.

GOLF PROS

Golf is enjoyed by thousands of amateur sport enthusiasts across the country, and the game is growing in popularity. Golf courses are provided either by private golf clubs for their members' use, or by communities for public use. No matter where the game is played, one of the services most appreciated by amateur golfers is that of the golf pro.

The golf pro teaches both beginners and skilled golfers how to improve their playing skills, through demonstrations and explanations. The club pro may spend part of the day taking a beginner through the game's basic strokes, or helping an experienced player who is having problems with a particular stroke. Club members who wish to improve their game often ask the pro to examine their play to discover what they are doing wrong, or ask to play a round with the pro either to test their game, or simply to enjoy the high standard of play.

Other duties of the pro include: organizing and conducting tournaments for club members; representing the club at tournaments held in other areas; purchasing, displaying and selling golf equipment, which involves looking after the stock and keeping records; and supervising a workshop where repairs and adjustments are made to equipment. He or she may act as an advisor in golf course maintenance, or in the construction of a new course.

Because the golf pro meets all kinds of people, success in the job requires gaining their respect. Competence in golf and the ability to communicate knowledge to others are both essential.

TENNIS, SKI, BADMINTON AND OTHER PROS

Although the sports differ, the duties and responsibilities of all other "pros" are virtually identical to those of golf pros: instructing, co-ordinating and providing professional expertise in the activities of the club where they are employed.

NATURE OF WORK

INSTRUCTORS

Some highly skilled Canadian athletes earn their living by instructing people who are trying to learn the basics, or improve their proficiency, in a specific sport. These include skiing, swimming, figure-skating, judo, riding and mountain-climbing instructors. Rather than concentrating on a specific sport, other instructors teach general calisthenics, gymnastics, and reducing exercises, in private clubs, gymnasiums, indoor or outdoor sports complexes.

Instructors explain and demonstrate skills and techniques, theories, strategies, rules, safety precautions, proper use of equipment, and exercise programmes applicable to their sport. They also watch others performing the appropriate activities to detect mistakes and correct errors. Instructors may teach one person at a time, or groups of people at all skill levels. They frequently organize and participate in competitions and demonstrations for their organization.

Many people are employed by elementary schools, secondary schools, community colleges and universities as physical education and recreation instructors. However, since their primary role is to teach in an educational institution, they will be discussed in detail in the "Careers Canada" booklet "Occupations in Teaching."

OFFICIALS

Without exception, every athletic or sporting competition is conducted according to strict rules regarding such items as numbers of participants, types of equipment, allowable behaviour, and time available. But even with rigid, clearly understood rules, disputes often arise. Consequently an unbiased person must be available to make firm decisions which all parties are required to respect. Numerous occupations in various settings, involve enforcing the applicable rules and regulations.

Examples of specific titles and activities of people in this category are:

Refereeing –
referees, umpires, linesmen, goal judges, racetrack stewards, and starters.

Keeping Scores and Other Records –
scorekeepers, timekeepers, statisticians, racing secretaries, handicappers, and clerks-of-the-course.

Judging Performances and Verifying Credentials of Participants –
judges, horse identifiers, receiving barn custodians, and clerks-of-scales.

All officials must be extremely knowledgeable in their sport or activity. They must be keen observers, have the ability to make quick, accurate decisions, and the confidence to make the decisions "stick." Needless to say, an official with a reputation for making mistakes will have a far more difficult time from participants as well as from spectators. The pressures can be great, and only really competent individuals survive as professional officials.

SPORTS SCIENTISTS AND FITNESS CONSULTANTS

The biological and behavioral effects of physical activity, and factors influencing athletic performance are being studied by a growing number of sports scientists. They concentrate on certain specialized areas, including the physiology of exercise, principles of motor learning, sports psychology, and biomechanics.

Some sports scientists examine people's responses and adaptation to movement (for example how the circulatory and respiratory systems of most people react to specific activities). Others investigate mental and genetic qualities contributing to proficiency in muscular movements, to discover better ways of teaching muscular skills. Still others attempt to identify, examine and influence the psychological principles underlying individual behaviours in sport and physical activity (for example, how involvement in sport affects personality and social skill; how people can be persuaded to become involved and improve their skills in physical activities).

Using a thorough knowledge of anatomy and the mechanical principles of human movement, another group of scientists is studying the efficiency of human movement by determining and measuring the most important physical variables in individual human performances. For example, which movements of competitive swimmers or sprinters are really wasted energy? By knowing this, athletes can improve their efficiency and their performances.

Sports scientists may also be involved in designing and testing athletic equipment (such as helmets and pads), or recommending fitness programmes for professional athletes. They may be employed by universities, governments, or fitness institutes.

SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS

A growing number of people are entering the sports field as administrators. They are usually employed as executive directors or technical directors of non-profit sports governing bodies. Their academic qualifications are often similar to those of sports scientists or consultants. A post-graduate degree in physical education, sports administration or a related field is the normal requirement, in conjunction with extensive experience in amateur sport.

WORKING CONDITIONS

To many people, the lives of professional athletes or those in other professional sports positions sound great: getting paid plenty of money for doing what most people are happy to do just for fun! The picture may be good in some ways, but it's not all rosy.

There is no such thing as a nine to five job in professional sports. Games and competitions are usually scheduled for times when most people are not working to attract large crowds of spectators. This means plenty of evening and weekend work. Although most games last under two hours of which an athlete may play only part time, countless hours are spent in practice to maintain proficiency and perfect teamwork.

For professional athletes seasons are often relatively short, but gruelling. Travel is frequent and tiring. In some sports approximately half the season is spent away from home; in others, travel is less disruptive. Some sports, such as hockey, football, boxing and rugger are physically rough as well as mentally demanding. Athletes, coaches and referees often endure high emotional and nervous tension, especially before and during competitions. An injury could end a career at any time. As few athletes hold multi-year contracts, fierce competition for the jobs available could mean losing a job or being traded to a club in a different city.

While sports such as swimming, baseball and tennis are played only under indoor or favourable outdoor climatic conditions, in others, such as football and skiing, athletes must endure extremes of weather.

It is obvious that the working conditions for people in professional sports vary considerably. Most professional sports people have a burning desire to excel, and although the life can be wearing and sometimes discouraging they usually thrive on it.

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement in professional sports may be from minor leagues to major leagues, but a pro in the majors has reached the top. From this point on, advancement will be in terms of recognition, authority on the team (assistant captain or captain), or financial returns.

One of the major pitfalls of a professional sports career is that it is often short; the average playing career of a football player is five or six years, of a hockey player about ten years. Thus planning for the future is a major concern of most professionals.

Many athletes go on to jobs related to their sport, such as coaching, scouting, or managing positions. Some find jobs in public relations, advertising or retail work where they can take advantage of their exposure to the public; others seek positions in physical education instruction. Many others fall back on second careers for which they prepared themselves before they received their first professional sports contract. Some would probably need to take upgrading or refresher courses.

Those employed as sports instructors (for example, judo or swimming instructors) can advance through various levels of certification to more senior instructional positions, and perhaps eventually manage a sports facility.

Golf, tennis, ski and other "pros" can progress to larger clubs or ski areas as they improve their skills and become better known. Their careers will generally be longer, and once established, more secure than those in professional team sports.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

People who make their living in professional sports obviously must have highly developed skills in their chosen sport, as well as good eyesight, keen hearing, sharp reflexes, plenty of endurance and, of course, excellent physical condition. Dedication, a strong liking for competition, and an intense desire to excel are essential.

Anyone employed in a professional sports capacity must be able to operate at top efficiency under stress and be capable of keeping cool when faced with provocations from hostile crowds or opposing players. The ability to follow orders even when they seem unreasonable is also essential. Those individuals who possess leadership qualities and can inspire others to greater efforts are always in demand. Courage and perseverance, even when in pain or exhausted, are also marks of the professional.

Coaches, instructors and officials must be mature individuals aware of human nature, and capable of taking charge in any situation. The ability to teach, encourage and influence the actions of other people is a must. Fairness, quick thinking and decision-making are also important.

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Most athletes who become professional do so before the age of 25 and leave professional sports before they reach 35. More athletes are completing college or university education before turning professional thus shortening their playing careers. However, education often proves invaluable when the athlete leaves active sports. Although any educational field may be entered, athletes tend to follow course patterns in physical education or programmes related to physical activities.

Preparation for a professional team career generally involves playing in organized leagues. Exceptional amateur athletes are scouted by professional teams, and may be awarded sports scholarships, progressing through minor league farm clubs until they attain major league calibre.

Sports pros, instructors and officials all must meet rigid standards to qualify as professionals. They must have a high level of proficiency in their sport, and appropriate skills in teaching and working with people.

At the professional team level, coaches are often former pros who have demonstrated very strong leadership and instructional abilities, as well as outstanding knowledge of the theories, techniques and strategies of their sport. Preparation and training, therefore, is similar to that of professional athletes. People hired by universities to coach specific sports and instruct physical or health education classes, usually require a post-graduate degree in physical education or a related subject.

Trainers normally require university or community college training in physical education with emphasis on anatomy, physiology, and physiotherapy. However, some still learn through on-the-job training under a qualified trainer.

A person interested in becoming a sports scientist or fitness consultant must complete at least one post-graduate degree, and will generally need a doctorate in physical education, kinesiology, kinanthropology, or biomechanics.

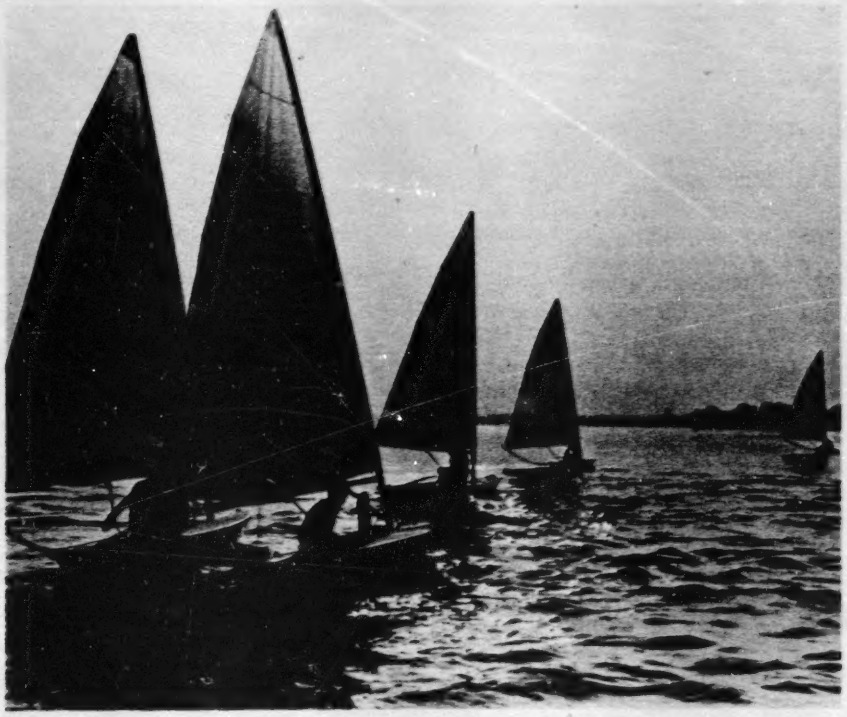
A minimum of high school graduation is strongly recommended for any field, particularly as a second career may be necessary after a relatively short time in professional sports. One of the best ways to prepare for a sports career is to be as active as possible in athletic organizations.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Interest in professional and amateur sports continues to rise steadily. As leisure time increases, more people have time to attend, watch or listen to sports competitions, and more importantly, become involved in them on an amateur basis.

The growth of sports audiences has created more opportunities for professional athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, and officials, while greater amateur involvement has led to more positions for sports instructors, pros, and sports and recreation administrators. Growing government and industrial awareness of the need for physical fitness has resulted in new jobs for physical fitness consultants. The constant striving for excellence in athletic competitions such as the Olympics, has necessitated a scientific approach to high-level sports. Although sports scientists are quite recent arrivals on the occupational scene, they have become a well-established and growing segment of the sports professionals.

Opportunities to earn salaries from sports will expand as a more lenient definition of the term "amateur" is adopted. But although the number of professional openings will increase, the competition for them will remain extremely keen.



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SPORTS OR RECREATION - WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

Before you choose a career, you should discuss your future plans with a guidance counsellor. Your counsellor can supply much more detailed information than this booklet can include, especially on such subjects as university and community college admission requirements. Your counsellor can help you decide whether your interests and abilities are really suited to the occupation you are considering. Your local Canada Manpower Centre counsellors can be of assistance, particularly in supplying details on job openings not only in your area but across the country. You should also try to get a "first-hand" impression by speaking with professionals in the occupation of your choice.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

The Careers Canada series has been designed to give you an idea of the many opportunities in the world of work. To take full advantage of these opportunities, you should plan your future over as long a period as possible. You may wish to read other booklets in this series to help plan your career.

Sports and recreation occupations appeal to people interested in being involved in, or leading others in, physical activities or leisure time pursuits. In this interest area you will find occupations that require from less than high school completion to several years of post-graduate university studies. Hopefully, after reading some of the material, you will be better prepared to select certain options which may be available to you in various training programmes.

Long range planning is fine if you have time, but if you have left school or wish to change occupations, you may need exact information about a particular occupation in your province immediately. For this reason, the Careers Provinces series, consisting of several leaflets each covering a single occupation, has been designed to give precise details of preparation, training, licensing or certification requirements, and pay scales. Careers Provinces leaflets will be available at your local Canada Manpower Centre in the near future and will be made available in high schools and other educational institutions.

There are also two standard publications – The Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations (CCDO), Volumes 1 and 2 – which contain a classification and description of over 6,700 occupations. These publications can be seen in Canada Manpower Centres or public libraries or can be ordered from Information Canada – catalogue number MP53-171/1 and MP53-171/2. The current price is $20 per copy.